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CONTENTS

Vol. XXXIV	April - June 2008	No. 2
Rasa and Bhava in Music by Dr. B. Arundhathi		3
The Varnam in Carnatic Music by Sumathi Krishnan		11
Sangita Nibandhah - Review of an Unpublished Manuscript (continued from previous issue) by 'Sangeetacharya' Dr. Vyzarsu Balasubramaniam		15
Violinist Extraordinaire - A. Kanyakumari Interview by Nalini Dinesh		19
Sadharana Gandharam by Dr. R. S. Jayalakshmi		25
Building Musical Bridges - The Hindustani Experience by Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan		33
The Rise and Fall of the Nattuvanar by A. Seshan		37
Logical Approach to Raga Parikrama in Hindustani Music by Prof. Y. M. Mahale		43
Vivid Visual Presentation of Vaishnavism in Bharatanatyam A Report by Jyothi Mohan		47
Indian Music, The Royal Path to Liberation by 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan		49
Mohiniattam Adavus & Mudras Book Review by Jyothi Mohan		51
Happenings at the Vidyalaya by Nalini Dinesh		52

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IN FOCUS

Rasa & Bhava are two terms that are often used interchangeably, both in the fields of music and dance, to denote the emotions evoked in the listener by ragas or sahitya and additionally, in dance, to denote the emotions being portrayed by the dancer. Dr. Arundhathi analyzes and clarifies these two terms with interesting references from ancient and contemporary texts.

The varnam is believed to be one of the most important tools for a student of Carnatic music, in his quest to master various aspects of the art. Read more about this in Sumati Krishnan's article.

Sangita Nibandhah - Review of an Unpublished Manuscript by Dr. Vyzarsu Balasubramanyam is concluded in this issue.

This quarter's interview features eminent violinist A. Kanyakumari.

The swaropaa of a raga is determined by the way each swara in its scale, is handled. The reverse also holds true - the way each swara is handled is determined by the swaropaa of a raga! In the article Sadharana Gandharam, Dr. R. S. Jayalakshmi analyzes the various ways in which the sadharana gandharam or G2 is handled in different ragas. The same subject provides fodder for another article, albeit in a different stream of music by, Prof. Y. M. Mahale in his Logical Approach to Raga Parikrama in Hindustani Music.

Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan comes up with a host of examples to illustrate the secular nature of music.

A. Seshan explores the changing role of a nattuvanar in dance through the ages. Visualize danseuse Urmila Satyanarayana's Bharatanatyam presentation on Vaishnavism through Jyoti Mohan's eyes, who also reviews a book by Geeta Radhakrishna, Mohiniattam Adavus and Mudras.

A unique tribute to Indian music from a shining luminary of Western classical music Yehudi Menuhin is featured in Garland Shri N. Rajagopalan's Indian Music - The Royal Path to Liberation.

Happenings at the Vidyalyaya, reports on the Swati Tirunal day, celebrated by the Vidyalyaya, which featured two very talented young singers and a seasoned veteran.

RASA AND BHAVA IN MUSIC

by Dr. B. Arundhathi, Senior Lecturer in Music,
Sree Narayana College for Women (UGC), Kollam, Kerala

Rasa

The term 'rasa' has literal meanings such as juice, taste, enjoyment etc., Naturally, in arts and fine arts, rasa is the enjoyment from the aesthetic point of view.

Rasa also denotes 'Navarasa' which is a concept developed and used in Natya, for conveying the desired bhava (mood) of a character, through the expressions on face. This is explained at length in Natyasasthra.

As far as music is concerned, the term rasa stands for enjoyment i.e. sangeetha rasa also.

Bhava

Though we speak much about ragabhava, sahitya-bhava etc, bhava is primarily a human aspect. The term bhava means mood. A few examples are the moods of joy, victory, depression, envy, anxiety etc.

Nava Rasa & Bhava

Bharatha has devoted the chapter "Rasavikalpam" in Natyasasthra, exclusively to explain the navarasa concept. The next chapter is "Bhavavyanjakam" dealing with the Bhavas. The following illustrations would be helpful in understanding the rasa-bhava relationship.

By some cause or other, when a feeling sprouts in mind, it is called manovikaram. This grows and spreads the entire

manomandalam (mental plane) creating a bhava or mood. Bhavathi ithi Bhava: means mood is that which happens (in mind). One may try to suppress it or express it, according to the circumstances and need. When expressed, it becomes bhava prakatanam. (expression of bhava).



When we express some bhavas that we are not really in, it is called acting or abhinaya. To make such acting natural and appealing, it becomes necessary to create suitable gestures and expressions on face.

In ordinary acting, the expressions of the character are natural as is in real life. This is called lokadharmee. In Natya - the classical acting, the moods are conveyed artistically. This is called Natyadharmee. Here, the expression becomes analytical, descriptive, pin pointed etc. and to make it really effective, various methods of expressing the moods and micro-moods are used. For this purpose, Bharatha analysed and studied the bhava aspects of mind in great depth. The analysis made by him in Natyasasthra is very deep and interesting even from the point of view of a psychologist.

He found out that there are certain basic *bhavas* behind all the out coming *bhavas* and identified them as *sthhayee- bhavas*. *Sthhayeebhavas* are permanent moods.

The *sthhayee bhavas* are eight in number and all the *bhavas* are grouped under them. When these *Sthhayeebhavas* are made enjoyable through abhinaya, they become eight *rasas*. Bharatha affirms that there is no difference between *Sthhayeebhava* and *rasa*, but for the states of their dormancy and activity respectively.

In *Natya*, it is the specific *Bhava* that is communicated to the spectators through the *rasas* and not the *Sthhayeebhavas*.

The following table shows the *Sthhayeebhavas*.

STHHAYEEBHAVAS

1. <i>Rathi</i>	Love
2. <i>Haasam</i>	Laughter
3. <i>Sokam</i>	Pathos
4. <i>Krodham</i>	Anger
5. <i>Uthsaaaham</i>	Enthusiasm
6. <i>Bhayam</i>	Fear
7. <i>Jugupsa</i>	Disgust
8. <i>Vismayas</i>	Wonder, Surprise

He has further stated that the primary *rasas* are four - *Srungaara*, *Veera*, *Raudra* and *Bheebhatsa*. In the next stage, he has determined the *rasas* that are produced as a result of or in response to the expressions of these four feelings. They are *haasya*, *atbhutha*, *karuna* and *Bhayaanaka*.

<i>Sringara</i>	➤	<i>Haasya</i>
<i>Veera</i>	➤	<i>Athbhutha</i>

<i>Raudra</i>	➤	<i>Karuna</i>
<i>Beebhatsa</i>	➤	<i>Bhayaanaka</i>

We can observe that *atbhutha* is the expression in response to *veera*. It is with *atbhutha* that we watch a heroic (*veera*) act. When a character is showing '*raudra*', the opposite character has naturally to confront or to submit. In case of confrontation he too expresses '*raudra*'. If submissive, the expression will be '*karunaa*'. Thus *karunaa* is a product of *raudra*. *Bhayaanaka* is the expression of a character seeing a *beebhatsa* character of situation. Similarly, if we look into the real literary meaning of *haasya*, it can be seen as the expression in response to *srungaara*.

These eight *rasas* are the original *rasas* derived from the eight *sthhayeebhavaas*.

The following table shows the *sthhayeebhavaas* and their respective *rasas* of expression.

<i>Sthhayeebhava</i>	<i>Rasa</i>
1. <i>Rathi</i> (Love)	<i>Srungaara</i>
2. <i>Haasam</i> (Laughter)	<i>Haasya</i>
3. <i>Krodham</i> (Anger)	<i>Raudra</i>
4. <i>Sokam</i> (Pathos)	<i>Karuna</i>
5. <i>Uthsaaaham</i> (Enthusiasm)	<i>Veera</i>
6. <i>Bhayam</i> (Fear)	<i>Bhayaanaka</i>
7. <i>Jugupsa</i> (Disgust)	<i>Beebhatsa</i>
8. <i>Vismaya</i> (Wonder, Surprise)	<i>Athbhutha</i>

Bharatha has added one more *rasa* which is beyond all these *rasas* viz. *Saantham*. *Saantham*, interestingly, is an expression of not being affected by any of these expressions.

According to Indian Philosophy, the ultimate aim of human life is salvation. This does not mean that material life and pleasures are matters to be devoid of. The evolution and development of fine arts, including music and dance, itself is an evidence of the importance given to the material life.

The aim of all classical arts is enjoyment as well as the attainment of spiritual uplift. The state of mind should be divinely calm i.e. *Saantham* for this.

In order to reach the state of *Saantham*, the mind should be free from all baser emotions. This is possible only through control of mind, which requires great effort.

The inclusion of *Saantham* as a separate *rasa* can be advocated on the ground that its expression is neither the combination of the other eight *rasas*, nor their absence. It is an entirely different expression that is above all the other expressions.

Accordingly, artistic ways of expressing each of these nine *rasas* on face were formulated. These facial expressions were so artistic and enjoyable, that the term *rasa* meaning enjoyment was apt to all of them.

Some add two more *rasas* to the group of nine. 1. *Vaatsalya* and 2. *Bhakthi*

But the widely accepted concept is still that of *Navarasa*.

In Tamil literature, the *rasa* is referred to as *Chuvai*. This word has the meaning of taste

also, which reveals the similarity of Sanskrit and Tamil in adopting the same term to mean taste as well as enjoyment. The nine *rasas* are termed - *Inpachuvai*, *Nakaichuvai*, *Uruthiruchuvai*, *Allachuvai*, *Virachuvai*, *Arpuchuvai*, *Inippuchuvai*, *Achachuvai* and *Nadunilaichuvai*.

In the early Sangam Literature (*Silappadikaram*) also we can see *ragas* used according to the *rasas*. Eg. The *Mullaipan* is used for both sorrow and happiness i.e. *Sambhoga* and *Vipralambha Srungaara*. The *Vilaripan* is supposed to evoke *karuna rasa* and it is said to have been used by Ravana in his yath during his imprisonment. Hearing this *raga*, Siva was pleased and Ravana was released. Thus we see the association of *raga* and *rasa* in the ancient Tamil age also.

RASA AND BHAVA IN MUSIC

Fine arts were developed by mankind for relaxation, relief, rejoicing, recuperation and rejuvenation. Naturally, the first criterion for identification of an art as a fine art is its ability to attract man and to impart enjoyment to him.

Samveda (communication) to human being or any other living being is through the five senses. Seeing and hearing are the prime ones among them. Voluntary effort is not needed to be influenced by sight and sound.

It can be seen that sound is a powerful medium of communication. To make the child sleep, mother sings lullabies. Sound

is also used to wake up a sleeping person. Any variation in the tone of presentation affects the total tone of communication. This is true with music also. Here begins the relationship of Raga and Bhava.

Music, literature, drawing and sculpture are the most popular forms of fine arts. Fine art is the communication or expression of feelings. It is actually an intuition that is transformed into poetry, music, drawing or acting through which the intended bhava is reflected. The carrier of this bhava is the rasa and when we relish it through an art form, we get the *rasaanubhava*. The following shloka establishes the prominence of music and literature among the fine arts.

*Sangeethamapi saahithyam saraswathiyaha stanadvayam I
Ekamaapaadamadhuram anyadalochanaamrutham II¹*

As has already been explained, conveying of some mood is essential for an art to become a fine art. This is applicable to music also.

Bhava or mood is important in music. Hence a musician should know enough about bhava, to be efficient in communicating it.

Even the music that does not convey some specific Bhava (mood), pleases the listener as such. Here the combination of sound is creating mere Rasa meaning pleasure. This enjoyment is called Sangeetha rasa or Gaanarasa. It is due to this ability to impart instant enjoyment even without carrying specific bhava, that music has attained the prime status among fine arts. Hence music

is called the finest among fine arts.

One important point to be noted here is that each raga can impart sangeetha rasa, besides the emotional moods it is used to convey.

The bhava of music consists of two aspects - raga bhava and sahitya bhava.

Ragabhava conveys the mood of the raga, whereas sahithyabhava conveys the meaning of the sahithya of the piece. When these two are interlinked and presented, it is a blissful experience. Ragabhava can be conveyed through pure music even without sahithya. When we hear a raga alapana, we enjoy it though there is no sahithya in it. It is the melody that enchants us. The appreciation of raga has different stages:

1. A music may be pleasing, i.e. sangeetha rasam
2. a. In addition, it may beautifully convey the mood of the raga
b. It may further convey the mood of the sahithya.
3. With or without the background of any sahithya, a raga may convey the mood with such a richness or density that it takes one to the transcendental level - bliss.

The mood conveyed by a raga is bhava, though it is generally interpreted as rasa. The word rasa can either be meant for enjoyment or for the navarasa. Navarasa

¹Subhashitharathna Bhadagaram - II - Compiled by Narayanarama Acharya - Nirnayasagar Press - Samanyaprakaranam - Subhashithaprasamsa - 8th shloka.

is the concept used in Abhinaya to convey the different bhavas. So, it would be apt to say that a particular raga can be used to create / intensify a bhava or mood.

Eg., The moods - grief, devotion, respect, sympathy, jealousy, alertness, shyness, fear etc.

As far as music is concerned, bhava is directly conveyed. However, when music is used to add gravity to the bhava in Natya, we can say that it adds intensity to the rasa and the corresponding bhava.

Usage of the terms rasa and bhava is often confusing. Since a raga is capable of creating or conveying a specific bhava, their relationship is ragabhava relationship.

There is the concept of ragas being classified according to the rasas. For eg *Khamas* for *Sringaara*, *Sahaana* for *Karuna* etc. This classification appears to be a reproduction of Bharatha's rasa - jathi concept used in Naatya.

Shlokas 1 to 15 of the Thathaathodya vidhi in the Naatyasastra of Bharata suggests the jathis (of shadajagrama as well as madhyamagrama) that are to be used to produce or boost the navarasas, by indicating the respective swaras connected to each rasa. It is stated that when a note becomes predominant in a raga, the raga becomes capable of expressing the rasa of that specific swara. Further, if we analyse the jathi system, we can see that Bharatha has gone deeper into this aspect. He brings out that the effect will be more, if such jathis are chosen where the swaras, related to

the rasas contradicting with the one under reference, are absent².

Bharatha linked the term rasa to music, when he was suggesting the apt jathi to accompany Naatya. But in absolute music, where music is used for its own sake, the concept of navarasa is not applicable. The relationship is actually that of raga and bhava. Krithis of the trinity, which create the mood of bhakthi, can be quoted as examples. Bhakthi is a bhava and not one of the navarasas. Similarly there are many moods created by ragas with or without sahithya, but they are bhavas and not merely the navarasas.

Sarangadeva has also referred to the rasa oriented application of swaras. A few examples are furnished below.

Svara	Rasa	
	Bharatha	Sarangadeva
S	Hasyam, srngaram, veeram, raudram, atbhutham	Veeram, raudram, atbhutham
R	Veeram, raudram, atbhutham	Same as Bharatha
G	Karuna	Same as Bharatha
M	Hasyam, srngaram	Same as Bharatha
P	Hasyam, srngaram	Same as Bharatha
D	Beebhatsam, Bhayanakam	Same as Bharatha
N	Karuna, atbhutham	Karuna

Sarangadeva mentions the classification of

²Bharatamuniyude Naatyasastram - Vol. II - Revised Edition Mar. 1987 - Translation: K. P. Narayana Pisharodi - Kerala Sahithya Akademi, Trichur - Page 257-259.

twenty two sruthis under five heads known as sruthi jathis³. This classification also was on the basis of the emotional aspect of sruthis, more or less like the rasa-swara aspect.

It was in the Sangeetha Makaranda of Narada that the raga-rasa relationship was treated first. He adopted a method of classifying rasas into genders.

Pullinga	Raudra, Atbhutha, Veera
Shreelinga	Karuna, Hasya, Sringara
Napumsakalinga	Bhayaanakam, Beebhalsam, Saantham

Further, some of the ragas, like Bangala, Hindolika, Bhoopali, Khanda, Thundi, Thurushka etc., prevailing in his period were classified into three genders according to the type of rasa they were capable of producing.

NAVA RASAS AND RAGAS

Since jathis paved the way for ragas, using specific ragas as accompaniment to specific rasas in Naatya came into vogue. Certain widely accepted rasa-raga allocations in the present day music are :-

Sringaram :	Vasantha, Surutti, Kamas
Veeram :	Devagandhaari, Bilahari, Aarabhi, Alana
Raudram :	Alana, Arabhi
Karuna :	Mukhari, Punnagavarali, Ahiri, Sahana
Santham :	Sama

It can be seen from the above that all rasas are not covered in the allocation.

A number of ragas are capable of expressing more than one bhava - by changing range and the stress given to various gamakas etc. The aspects of rhythm viz., speed, gathi and type of the thaala etc., also affect bhava. It affects the density and sometimes even changes the bhava. Another factor is that different gradations of the same bhava are expressed through different ragas.

"For example, if we take a feeling like grief, we can conceive of superficial grief, ordinary grief, bearable grief, unbearable grief and very deep overwhelming and heart - rending grief. Ragas like Mukhari, Naadanamakriya, Punnagavarali, Ghanta and Ahiri can respectively portray these different degrees of grief."⁴

Some ragas are assigned specific bhavas and not rasas, as mentioned above.

It is found that certain ragas impart more enjoyment, if they are sung during particular time of the day or night. This is the basis for the formulation of the Time Theory of Ragas. A few ragas according to their matching time are given below:

³Samgitaratnakara - Vol. 1- Adhyaya 1 - 1943 - Edited by Pandit S. Subrahmanya Sasthri - The Adayar Library, Madras - Page number 96, shloka 59

⁴South Indian Music Book V - 4th Edition - 1982 - Professor P. Sambamoorthy - Indian Music Publishing House, Madras 1 - Page 170.

Pre-Sunrise :	Bhoopala, Revagupthi, Bauli, Malayamaarutha, Valaji, Desakshi
Purvodaya (Prabhata)	Bilahari, Kedaram, Dhanyasi
Forenoon	Asaveri
Midday	Sriraaga, Madhyamavati
Afternoon	Mukhari, Begada
Evening	Vasantha, Nattakurinji, Purvikalyani

This concept is well exploited in visual arts like musical drama, dance drama, films etc., where music is used as background.

The identity as well as the emotional aspect of a raga depends on the frequency of the notes like the jeeva swaras and the nyasa swaras. When all the swaras in a raga are jeeva swaras, it can produce multiple rasas. For example, Bhairavi, Kalyani, Sankaraabharanam, Thodi and Kamboji.

When compositions are set to music, the correct ragas should be chosen so as to match the Sahithya. Music without emotion cannot appeal to man's soul.

The subject of raga-bhava relationship has been studied by many. Sometimes, the different interpretations or observations have been contradictory too.

"Language is an important factor of rasa. Because, what is heard or read is couched in language, so for the production of rasa, Sahithya is as much important as Sangeetha. To put it briefly, Sahithya is the real source of rasa. Raga abides in swaras

and rasa abides in bhavas. Sahithya generates the rasa, Sangeetha enhances and elevates it."⁵

"That ragas have specific rasas can be illustrated from the fact that if a pathetic Sahithyam is set and sung to a tune in a raga, whose dominant rasa is Veera, it is the heroic aspect of the tune than that will impress the listeners inspite of the pathetic idea underlying the Sahithya."⁶

In both the statements, the term bhava would have suited better in place of the word rasa, because it is the bhava that is ultimately communicated.

The first statement gives more emphasis to the bhava of sahithya whereas the second statement attaches prominence to the bhava of the tune or music.

Irrespective of the Sahithya, it is in fact through the tones, gestures and facial expressions that bhava is conveyed in Naatya. A particular word can be given various bhavas and even various degrees of one bhava, when rendered in dialogue, by varying the tone. Thus, the tone becomes more effective in expressing the feeling than the Sahithya. That is why we are able to enjoy many audiovisual arts, though their languages are not known to us. Similarly the tone of the music can be varied in many ways, which can influence the audience more than the sahithya

⁵Ragas and Rasas - by E.N. Purushothaman M.A and Maurthi Indira M.A. - Shanmukha Volume IX No. 3

⁶South Indian Music Book V - 4th Edition - 1982 - Professor P. Sambamoorthy - Indian Music Publishing House, Madras 1 - Page 163 - 3rd Paragraph

contents. Raga alapana, one of the main features of manodharma sangeetha, belonging to the sphere of pure music, is full of bhava though it has no sahithya. Even instrumental music is capable of conveying bhavas very effectively. So, as far as the bhava and sound are concerned, all types of manipulations of the sound and even the silence in between play a major role in conveying the bhava.

The merit of a music composer lies in his ability to understand the mood intended to be conveyed through the music with or without sahithya and compose tunes in such a way that they bond with the sahithya precisely and the listener cannot imagine a better tune.

The merit of a singer lies in his ability to understand and convey the bhava created by the sahithya and sangeetha, without any drain, as a result of which the listener cannot but yield to the bhava.

The following observation establishes the importance of bhava in music, as discussed above.

"For a musical composition to be meaningful and beautiful, it should be rich

in bhava; for a concert to be appealing, the renderings by the artist should be replete with bhava. In short, bhava is that which enables the transmission of experience, thought and emotion from composer to musician and further from musician to listener. Bhava has to be experienced by every individual in personal and subjective manner."⁷

Certain schools or individuals follow a particular style of rendering gamakas for certain ragas. But that caters to the ear, as a different delicious flavour, which may not become delicious when rendered by others.

To put it briefly, minute sruthi changes within the limit or range prescribed or even with some violations, gamaka peculiarities and the rendering manners may feel enjoyable when performed by a veteran artist, as he can handle it safely and enjoyably. If it is well received by audience at large, then it becomes an established style of that artist and it may be followed by the succeeding generations.



⁷The Art and Science of Carnatic Music - First Edition 1983 - Vidya Shankar - The Music Academy, Madras - Page 93



THE VARNAM IN CARNATIC MUSIC

by Sumathi Krishnan

As a musical form, the varnam is versatile and is of immense value to the world of Carnatic music. This form of composition is recent in origin and was first composed some time in the 17th century. The early types of varnams suggest that they were first created for dance as the sol-fa patterns alternating with the music and sahitya seemed ideal for abhinaya or expression and brisk dance movement.

The genesis of the varnam was in Tanjavur, a place rich in culture and heritage. After the end of the Chola rule in the 13th century, the Nayaks took over sometime in the 17th century. The Nayaks were patrons of art, literature and music. They came from the Vijayanagar empire and hence brought along with them the legacy of the Telugu language for music. Coincidentally, this was a centre where scholarly musicians assembled and the varnams were a result of their effort in creating this new musical form.

The language of varnams : The earliest varnams were in Telugu. The existing musical tradition is what has grown and flourished in the Tanjavur region a few centuries ago. Telugu was the court language of the Nayak rulers and subsequently, the Maratha rulers. Many Telugu families migrated to Tanjavur around this time and some of the great composers of Carnatic music belong to these families. Prolific compositions were in the highly Sanskritised Telugu which was then prevalent.

Many of the varnams were sung as a *birudu* or in praise of patrons or had *sringara bhava* expressed through the medium of dance. Telugu as a language has a lot of vowel endings, which facilitates prolonging sound and the melody. These vowel sounds are extremely important in voice training as it allows free flow of breath and sound. Telugu also seems to have been the language of music, dance and poetry.

Subsequently, many varnams were composed in Tamil. Some of the Tamil varnams were based on the same tune as the earlier Telugu varnams. There are also plural sahityas for some varnams. For the same varna mettu or svara framework, several sahityams were composed by the Tanjore Quartette who enjoyed the royal patronage of Travancore.

Literally, varna refers to colour or caste. The term varna in treatises on music, essentially meant melodic movement till a few centuries ago. The form varnam developed over the last three or four centuries in the system of Carnatic music. One of the earliest available texts on music, the Sangita Sarvartha Sara Sangrahamu records a number of varnams as it is sung today. This is a text in Telugu compiled by Veena Ramanujayya.

The structure of a varnam: Broadly, a varnam consists of two major divisions, the *purvagam* or the first part and the *uttaragam* or the latter part.

The purvanga consists of a pallavi, anupallavi and the muktayi svaram while the uttaranga or charanam has the sahitya line and four or five brief svara passages known as ettukada svaram. The sahitya line is repeated after each ettukada svaram.

The majority of varnams are in adi or ata talam but there are varnams in rupakam and rare ones in matya, dhruvam etc.

The sahityam consists only of a few lines, invariably in praise of the king, patron or benefactor. Sometimes the words conveyed are full of srngara bhava and are suitable for expression through dance. The sahityam is not really important in a tana varnam and very often one gets to understand the meaning only after carefully joining the words.

A part known as the anubandham, is seen in some varnams. This follows the charanam ettukada svaras and actually completes the meaning of the first sahitya line of the charanam. Following the anubandham, the anupallavi is sung along with the muktayi svaram and the varnam is concluded with the first line of the pallavi. The tradition of singing the anubandham has practically faded out, though my Guru Sangita Kalanidhi Smt. R. Vedavalli renders it in her concerts in the Bhairavi ata tala varnam 'Viriboni'. The pallavi svarakalpavalli of Veena Kuppayyar has the anubandham even for adi tala varnams like *Sarasakshi nine kori* in Kambhoji.

The value of varnams: A seemingly simple composition has enormous value for the Carnatic musician. From being a stepping

stone from the early sol-fa exercises to the kriti, it has become a treasure house in terms of developing creativity, training the voice and in the preservation of the raga svarupam.

Initially, pada varnams were composed for dance. This type of varnam has sahitya for the muktayi as well as the ettukada svaras. Later on one of the pioneers in the creation of varnams, Pachimirium Adiyappaiyya composed the tana varnam *Viriboni* in Bhairavi and broke away from the pada varnam tradition. Tana varnam as the name implies has the feel of singing a tanam with its stresses and patterns. Ideally it should be sung in the madhyama kalam like tanams. Subsequently, many tana varnams were created by scholarly musicians and varnam came to be an integral part of the system of Carnatic music. Well known composers of varnams are Pallavi Gopala Iyer, Veena Kuppayyar, the tajore Quartette, Swati Tirunal, Kothavasal Venkatarama Iyer, Tiruvottriyur Thyagayyar, Patnam Subramanya Iyer and Veena Seshanna. More recently, Muthiah Bhagavathar, Mysore Vasudevachar, Mulavattam Rangaswami and Papanasam Sivan have composed Varnams.

Varnams range from the very simple such as those in Mohanam or Hamsadhvani that are taught to beginners. There are also varnams full of raga bhava in ragas such as Nayaki and Surati that are handled by a more seasoned musician. The transition from the simple to complex is really imperceptible but a musician learns many varnams over the years unknowingly absorbing the fundamentals of Carnatic music in a seemingly unobtrusive way.

Purandaradasa is believed to have created the early solfa exercises for a beginner of Carnatic music. Curiously he did not think of the varnam which was composed many years later. Among the musical trinity, Syama Shastri composed four varnams and each is in a different talam.

Nive gatiyani in Kalyani raga, *Tisra Matya Svamini Rammanave* in Anandabhairavi raga, *Ata talam Na manavini* in Saurashtram, *Chatusra Ata Dayanidhe mamava* in Begada, *Adi talam*

Muthuswami Dikshitar has composed a rare Sanskrit Varnam *Gajananaya namaste* in Sankarabharanam but Sri Thyagaraja restricted himself to kritis and did not compose any varnam. *Rupamu Juchi* is a Telugu varnam in Todi ascribed to Muthuswami Dikshitar but the song does not bear his mudra of 'guruguha'.

After the initial exercises, the varnam is introduced to the student of Carnatic music. This helps in a number of ways. Since it is a combination of svaras and sahityam, it is useful in introducing raga bhavam to the student. Many gitams have a syllable for each note making the song fairly mechanical whereas varnams have a lot of vowel extensions allowing free flow of melody and training in holding sustained notes. Apart from an initiation into different ragas, varnams in different talas like adi and ata give the student a grip over the laya aspect.

For a student who is at a more advanced level, varnams in rakti ragas like Kedaragaula, Saveri, Surati etc may be introduced. These compositions express

the nuances of a raga as much as a kriti. Varnams in major ragas like Todi, Sankarabharanam, Bhairavi, Kalyani and Kambhoji strengthen their grasp of the raga. The Varnam is like an abhyasa ganam and a lot of learning takes place at the subconscious level. Maturity and musical growth happen in a gentle yet sure manner.

For a concert musician, the varnam is usually the first piece and sets the tone and pace of the concert. It serves as a vocal exercise for the voice to settle down before the concert progresses. Sometimes a musician may show his prowess by singing tisram or by singing the varnam in a really fast pace displaying his vocal flexibility.

For a Guru, listening to a student singing a varnam in many speeds is a kind of a test of the student's progress and commitment to music. This composition will certainly reflect the effort put in, the hours of sadhana or practice and the level of understanding of the music.

Some Interesting varnams

Some interesting and rare varnams have come to light through Music Academy journals and in books like the Sangita Sampradaya Pradarshini of Subbarama Dikshitar. *Sariganidani* by Ramaswami Dikshitar is a svarakshara varnam in Todi raga. There are other varnams where svaraksharas appear in parts. There is yet another varnam in Sriranjani, which was left incomplete by Ramaswami Dikshitar and subsequently, charanam ettukada svaras were composed one each by Shyama Shastri, Chinnaaswami and Muthuswami Dikshitar. A rare tana varnam of Veenai

Kuppaiyyar and Walajapet Venkataramana Bhagavathar which has the anuloma viloma krama or is like a palindrome is given in the Journal of the Music Academy from the book Oriental music by Chinnasami Mudaliar. The sahityam is as follows.

Pallavi

Sarasa ku raaku sarasa

Vara manasuna marava

Anupallavi

Para veladura verapa

Nā rava manumā vara nā

More recently, Calcutta Krishnamurthy has composed a grahabheda varnam starting with the raga Madhyamavati and going on to Hindolam, Suddha Saveri, Suddha Dhanyasi and Mohanam.

There are varnams where some prayogas have been changed to make them fit into present day raga delineation as in the Begada varnam *Inta Chalamu* where the *dns* prayogas have been changed to *drs*. There are some varnams where the authorship of a single varnam is ascribed to different composers in different books as some composers shared the same mudra. There are also varnams where the author is unknown and is listed as *prachina* or ancient. It is important not just to document varnams in print but to have an audio collection as subtle nuances can never be learnt from a piece of paper. Efforts have been made by well known musicians and musicologists, to collect all the varnams available and archive it for posterity. The varnam as a form is of great value and documenting it will be of immense value for future generations. □

SANGITA NIBANDHAH - Review of an Unpublished Manuscript

by 'Sangeetacharya' Dr. Vyzarsu Balasubrahmanyam, M.A. (Music), M.Phil (Music), Ph.D. (Music)

(continued from previous Issue of Shanmukha, January-March, 2008)

Mela-s:

Using the svara variations, the author of this work' has evolved a scheme of mela-s for the three vina-s - Brahma Vina, Vishnu Vina and Siva Vina, which are discussed below.

1. Brahma Vina - 6,084 mela-s

The author works out a scheme of 6,084 mela-s for the Brahma Vina on the basis of 24 sruti-s, with 34 names of svara-s distributed among them. The scheme is based on the seven types of rishabha and gandhara, seven types of dhaivata and nishada and four types of madhyama. The following illustration will clearly explain the formation of the scheme of 6,084 mela-s.

A combination of 7 rishabha-s and 7 gandhara-s will give 39 chakra-s:

prati suddha rishabha	x	7 gandhara-s	=	7 chakra-s
suddha rishabha	x	7 gandhara-s	=	7 chakra-s
prati chatussruti rishabha	x	7 gandhara-s	=	7 chakra-s
chatussruti rishabha	x	6 gandhara-s	=	6 chakra-s
prati shatsruti rishabha	x	5 gandhara-s	=	5 chakra-s
shatsruti rishabha	x	4 gandhara-s	=	4 chakra-s
chyuta gandhara rishabha	x	3 gandhara-s	=	3 chakra-s
Thus, forming a total of				39 chakra-s

Further, a combination of 7 dhaivata-s and 7 nishada-s would give another 39 chakra-s. This is explained as:

prati suddha dhaivata	x	7 nishada-s	=	7 chakra-s
suddha dhaivata	x	7 nishada-s	=	7 chakra-s
prati chatussruti dhaivata	x	7 nishada-s	=	7 chakra-s
chatussruti dhaivata	x	6 nishada-s	=	6 chakra-s
prati shatsruti dhaivata	x	5 nishada-s	=	5 chakra-s
shatsruti dhaivata	x	4 nishada-s	=	4 chakra-s
chyuta nishada dhaivata	x	3 nishada-s	=	3 chakra-s
Thus, forming a total of				39 chakra-s

These two sets of 39 chakra-s multiply and become 1,521 mela-s ($39 \times 39 = 1521$). Further, it is mentioned that there are 4 madhyama-s - prati suddha madhyama, suddha madhyama, prati madhyama and prati panchama madhyama. Through these four madhyama-s, 1,521 mela-s multiply four times and become a total of 6,084 mela-s. ($1521 \times 4 = 6084$).

These 6,084 mela-s are grouped under 156 chakra-s, each consisting of 39 mela-s. For every 39 chakra-s, the madhyama changes. The rishabha and gandhara remain constant within a chakra whereas dhaivata and nishada change from mela to mela within a chakra.

2. Vishnu Vina

The author has not clearly mentioned as to how many mela-s exist for the Vishnu Vina, which has 18 different svara variations.

3. Siva Vina - 72 mela-s

There are 72 mela-s given in this work for Siva Vina on the basis of 12 sruti-s, with 16 names of svara-s distributed among them. The scheme is based on the three kinds of rishabha and gandhara, three kinds of dhaivata and nishada and two kinds of madhyama.

These 72 mela-s are grouped under 12 chakra-s, each consisting of 6 mela-s. The two madhyama variations divide these 72 mela-s into 36 chakra-s each. While the rishabha and gandhara remain constant within a chakra, dhaivata and nishada

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change from mela to mela within a chakra.

Raga-s:

The author begins describing the Raga part by stating that the sound produced by the strings is considered to be Sruti, which is believed to be of three Grama-s - Shadja, Madhyama, Gandhara. While the Sruti differences are considered as the deciding factors for the path of singing, these are given for Vina-s and the Sruti variations are given as nine - Mandra-Mandra, Mandra-Madhyama, Mandra-Tara, Madhya-Mandra, Madhya-Madhyama, Madhya-Tarakam, Tara-Mandra, Tara-Madhyama and Tara-Tara - which are the differences produced by the strings.

The author then explains that raga procreation takes place from the arrangement of svara-s in ascending and descending order, melody being generated from the gamaka variations of svara-s. Based on these principles, it is mentioned that there are three kinds of raga-s - Suddha, Salava and Sankirna.

Suddha raga-s are described as those having svara variations in the same order in Arohana and Avarohana. As stated earlier, while the Chakra-s arising from the prastara of sapta svara-s is seven, based on khanda prastara, a Sampurna chakra will have only one variation. Similarly, Shadava, Oudava, Svarantara, Samika, Gadhika and Archika chakra-s will have three, five, seven, nine, eleven and thirteen khanda variations, respectively, which are believed to have the nine signs of Suddha raga-s.

Salava raga-s are described as those

having a combination of svara-s, not only belonging to its own group, but also an alien one in the Arohana and Avarohana.

The author further explains that - as given by Maharshi Narada, when Nyasa svara happens to be the Grahabheda svara, it is called a Sankirna raga. Thus, numberless raga-s are born with the variations of these three characteristics.

It is also said that for the three Grama-s - Shadja, Madhyama, Gandhara - there exist seven Murchana-s, thus making up twenty one Murchana variations. With regard to the Raga aspect, the author also describes the characteristics of Alipta, which is based on a combination of svara-s, as being of two types Ragalipta and Rupalipta. There are no further details about the number of janya raga-s born out of the mela-s of the Brahma, Vishnu and Siva Vina-s.

However, the author describes the classification of raga-s based on gender as Masculine, Feminine and Neuter, which are said to have been featured by the differences of Gana, (Song), Kala (Period) and Rasa (Emotion) and evoke Raudra, Adbhuta, Vira rasa-s when Masculine raga-s are sung; Sringara, Karuna and Santa rasa-s when Feminine raga-s are sung and; Bhayanaka, Bhibhatsa and Hasya rasa-s when Neuter raga-s are sung.

Gamaka-s:

The author of Sangita Nibandhah writes that there are ten varieties of gamaka variations. They are: Sthayi, Svara, Sanchari, Ahata, Anahata, Kampita, Andolika, Dhalu, Udgraha, Mukhtayi.

Tala-s:

The author of Sangita Nibandhah starts describing the Tala part by mentioning the importance of Tala for singing and writes that Nada accompanied by proper Tala will always create happiness and when devoid of it, singing is futile. The author then defines Tala as a measure of time and says in the word 'Tala', the 'Ta' kara comes from the enunciation of Siva and 'La' kara from that of Parvati.

The author then proceeds to describe the ten Prana-s of Tala - Kala, Anga, Kriya, Jati, Prastara, Kala, Marga, Laya, Yati and Graha. The author then gives the evolution of Tala names and proceeds to describe the names and features of Tala. The author then lists and explains the names of 108 Tala-s alongwith the details of number of Akshara-s, Anga-s, Kala and Yati as pronounced by Narada.

Other Concepts

Apart from these, the author of Sangita Nibandhah has mentioned several other topics related to the theory of music and has stated that experts in music have given them. These are:

1. 10 characteristic features of a Svara:

The author of Sangita Nibandhah states that gamaka variations of svara-s reflect the beauty of Raga-s during Ragalapana etc., and that there are ten special characteristics given for svara-s, which are enumerated as: Vyaktam, Purnam, Prasannam, Sukumaram, Alankritam, Samam, Suratnam, Shrestham, Nikristham and Madhuram.

2. 10 flaws of Svara-s :

The author further explains that there are ten flaws

of svara-s, which are: Dushtam, Lokam, Asastram, Srutikalavirodhi, Punarukti, Bahyam, Gatam, Apartham, Gramyam and Sandhigdam

3. Characteristics of Musical Forms:

Another concept explained by the author is the characteristics of musical forms like Gita and Prabandha.

4. Varieties of Songs:

Yet another musical element explained by the author as being told by learned men of the yore are the four kinds of expressions - Suladi, Namavali, Churnika and Nataka.

5. Types of singing:

The author of Sangita Nibandhah describes that singing is of three kinds, known as - Yakala, Yamala, Brinda, as pronounced by learned scholars.

6. 25 flaws in the performance of a Singer:

Another interesting element explained by the author of this work is the listing of 25 faults of a singer, which are Sandashta, Dushta, Sitvara, Bhita, Kampita, Shankita, Karali, Kutila, Kaki, Vitala, Karahinaka, Sambaka, Baki, Vakra, Prasari, Nimilika, Virasa, Apasvara, Avyakta, Sthanabhrashta, Avyavasthita, Misra, Vikona, Anaradanika and Anunasika.

7. Characteristics of a good Singer:

The author then describes the qualities of a good singer, and says an accomplished singer is one who

- is endowed with a pleasant voice,
- has a stable mind,
- worships the divine and the learned;
- has learnt many new things and is knowledgeable;

- has expertise in raga-s,
- sings sweetly and pleasantly, with emotions, dexterity and proficiency in many aspects of the science of it.

The author finally concludes this part by saying that in ancient period, music as sung by Brahma and his associates, was sung by learned men and the science and practice of Raga-s as given in the three Vina-s was duly sung by the Gods and Demons. Mankind, on earth, have learnt the Raga-s and other variations, and have always sung the name of God, accordingly and those who sing with devotion will enjoy the bliss forever.

Conclusion:

From the foregoing study of Sangita Nibandha, it is clear that it has focussed on various theoretical aspects and their implicit usage for the practical aspects of performance, with regard to the components given in the work and their relevance to the present day music.

From the discussion of the srutimela-s, we can observe that the merit of the scheme of 6,084 mela-s lies in the utilisation of the 24 sruti-s in its formulation. However, the scheme remains as a mere theoretical postulate as they do not reflect the contemporary practice.

The scheme of mela-s for Vishnu Vina has not been discussed in detail and the utilisation of 12 sruti-s has also not been given. Hence, this scheme also seems to be only a mere theory.

The study with contemporary literature reveals that though the different mela schemes may be comparatively of little

practical value as such, they may be considered rather important from the historical and theoretical points of view.

However, the formulation of the scheme of 72 mela-s based on 12 sruti-s and 16 svarasthana-s is close to the present day music. This formulation is an event of far reaching significance in the history of Carnatic Music. It is the view of some scholars that this nomenclature is a recent one but we are yet to know when exactly all the 72 were made equally and practically important and became current with the names.

Further, the raga classification in terms of gender enumerated in this work is not in practice in the present day music. However, it assumes importance in terms of historical evolution of raga-s.

Also, the details of tala, its evolution, the ten Prana-s of tala and the scheme of 108 tala-s stand as an important textual source for the tala-s which have been the life and basis for music and re-instate the existence of several systems of tala over the centuries.

Further, a discussion of the various gamaka-s studied in this work throws light on the various new varieties of gamaka-s that had been in use and continue to be in use in some traditions even today.

Further, a few other concepts and elements important in the practice of music have been given in this work, which are very much relevant for implementing in the current trends of performance of music. □

INTERVIEW

VIOLINIST EXTRAORDINAIRE - A. KANYAKUMARI

by Nalini Dinesh

We had a multi-faceted musician perform for us recently at Shanmukhananda Sabha in the Golden Greats series, in memory of the legendary singer and music guru Smt. M.L. Vasantakumari. It was a joyous trip down memory lane, on the wings of choice items from MLV's repertoire. She is renowned violinist A. Kanyakumari, a lady who thrives on challenges, and enjoys beating the un-trodden path like a true pioneer. She is the recipient of many awards like the Kalaimamani (1991), Sangeet Natak Academy Award (2003) Asthana Vidwan of Sringeri & Ahobila Math, Tantri Naada Mani of Kanchi Math, Dattapitham of Ganapathi Sachidananda Swami of Mysore, etc. Shanmukha steals some time off her packed schedule, to capture the various facets of her eventful musical career.

The Student

Q) Please tell us a little about your family background and initiation into music.

My family is from Vijayawada. On the insistence of Sri Ivaturi Vijayeswara Rao, who was my sisters' guru, I joined the music school that he had just started (named after his guru Shri Dwaram Narasinga Rao Naidu), as the first student, despite my parents' doubts about my seriousness and aptitude-playful, happy-go-lucky youngster that I was.

Q) What were the key features of your tutelage under Sri Ivaturi Vijayeswara Rao?

Guru was visually-challenged, but was still able to teach fresh students bowing, fingering etc. I completed a diploma in this school, the diploma covering the entire margam, from playing Sa Pa Sa till RTP. Of course, I also attended regular school. There was a lot of healthy competition at the music school, motivating me to put in a lot of practice, for instance, a daily routine of 500 times trishayi practice of all the initial exercises like sarali, jantai, alankaram, datu. Another great learning opportunity that we had was during our Guru's practice sessions at his home in the evening, when we used to play with him.

Q) What was the kind of practice schedule you followed in your later years? Apart from playing technique, how did you work on developing manodharma?

I continue to practice trishayi even now, because perfect synchronization is needed between left-hand fingering and right-hand bowing. For manodharma, one has to listen a lot, and accompany artistes as much as possible. The Guru



can show pointers to the student to develop manodharma, but the student should also be in a position (mentally and intellectually) to grasp it, for which listening and accompanying is a must. I used to practice varnams a lot, kritis too. Of course, I couldn't practice for hours on end during college days but would consistently put in at least a couple of hours.

Q) How did your shift to Chennai come about?

I finished the diploma and regular school around the same time, in 1967. I applied for admission in Queen Mary's College in Chennai for a bachelor's degree in music, on the suggestion of my grandfather who lived in Chennai, but was told that all seats were already filled. Then we decided to visit Tirupati thinking that, if Lord Venkateswara's grace was with me, I would get a seat on return. And sure enough, on returning to Chennai, by the recommendation of a relative in the University, I was duly auditioned and successfully secured a seat in QMC.

Q) Did your shift to Chennai mark the end of formal training under a guru?

Not at all. I wanted to learn more. Moreover I had won the Central Government scholarship for learning under a renowned guru, and wanted to utilize this opportunity. We approached veteran violinist, Shri M. Chandrasekaran. He agreed to teach me after a trial, since he was not sure if I could grasp his style, it being very different from the Dwaram style.

Q) What were your key learnings from Shri M. Chandrasekharan?

His style is very difficult - it is in the nagaswaram bani, perfection-oriented, and so caressing, only he can play his style! He encouraged me to find my own style, and so did MLV amma. Mine is a mixture of the Dwaram style, Chandrasekharan sir's and MLV amma's style.

The Accompanist

Q) Tell us about your early years, as an accompanist in Chennai.

Even in college days and in the years of my tutelage under Chandrasekaran sir, I had started playing for concerts in a small way. My grandfather, with whom I was staying then, was conservative and afraid to send me to concerts alone. Nevertheless, I somehow managed to accompany quite a few artistes in temple concerts etc. like Yogam Santhanam and the Principal of your Vidyalaya, Smt. Radha Namboodiri.

Q) How did you equip yourself with the skills required for a good accompanist?

I listened a lot to great accompanists. Some vocalists want you to play along with them, some want you to play a big phrase after they sing a big phrase, some want you to play only the last part of the phrase.

I would say that an accompanist should be much more prepared and have greater presence of mind than the main artiste, since the main artiste is prepared with what he/she is going to render. Practising with the main artiste may be possible sometimes, but even then, they may change their plans on the concert

platform, not their fault, of course, so one has to have great presence of mind

For successfully accompanying RTP, in the initial stages of an artiste's career, one can try to learn the pallavi beforehand from the main artiste. So as in everything else, everyone in the team should cooperate for the concert to shine.

Q) How did you start accompanying instrumentalists, famed as you are for consistently playing with prodigies like Mandolin U. Srinivas and great masters like Kadri Gopalnath and Dr. N. Ramani? Do you find it any different, accompanying instrumentalists vis-a-vis vocalists?

I used to accompany Chandrasekaran sir a lot. I also accompanied Flute Mali a little bit, he was very encouraging. Ramani sir also encourages youngsters a lot.

Accompanying a vocalist is easier than an instrumentalist. We have to adjust our instrument's volume according to the main instrument and keep up with the main artiste's speed and style. Sangatis that sound good in one instrument may not sound good on the violin. So we need to adapt. I was able to because of guru kataksham, and because of guru kataksham, the audience also felt that I enhanced the effect of the instrumental concert.

Q) Is there any difference in accompanying male and female vocalists?

Accompanists generally prefer to play for male vocalists as the instrument's tone is better and richer in lower sruti, and easier to play. In a higher sruti, there

is more tension in the strings, hence the tone is sharper and shriller and more difficult to play. Infact, I have attained name and fame while playing for top female vocalists like MLV amma and Bombay sisters. However, while playing solo, I tune my violin to 1 ½ kattai for the same reason as above.

Q) Do you feel any restrictions / limitations being a woman artiste?

I didn't have much of a problem as an accompanist, because I accompanied great artistes throughout, like MLV, then Mandolin Srinivas, then Kadri. I used to anticipate some male vocalists refusing my accompaniment, so I used to refuse beforehand! It wasn't a disappointment for me. My only priority was, audiences should come to my concerts and listen to me and I should get enough importance in the concert.

But as an innovator, when I want to push ideas across, I face resistance and lack of resources, being a lady. If I make an innovation and want someone to support it, they don't respond immediately, and I too feel delicate to keep asking them.

Also in terms of recognition, I don't feel I've got my due after these 40 odd years of playing.

Q) Please talk about your experiences in accompanying MLV.

I first accompanied MLV amma in a wedding concert in Aug. 1971. I don't know if I played anywhere near well enough to match her greatness, but she seemed to like it. It was six months before I got to meet her again, during

which time I used to deliberately pass by her house to see if she would spot me by chance! Not being able to contain myself anymore, I finally barged into her house one afternoon. She had just finished her lunch, and chewing on betel leaves. She called her secretary and asked for her dates in Aug., and forthwith told me that I could accompany her for those dates!

But I had one more test to pass before I became her regular accompanist! She sang a kutchery in RA Puram Pillaiyar Koil and invited all her fans and well-wishers. They all proclaimed that I would come up to great heights and from then on, I became her regular accompanist. MLV amma was so loyal that once, for an AIR recording in Delhi, when I was denied on the grounds that I wasn't a graded artiste, MLV amma refused to do the recording either, before AIR finally relented! Artistes of those times were also very cooperative. I used to play for Bombay sisters a lot at that time. They used to let me play for MLV amma despite my having a prior commitment with them, because they didn't want me to lose the opportunity of playing for a great artiste like MLV amma.

Q) What was MLV amma's influence on your music?

It was a tremendous experience playing for her. Kutcheries were training grounds. We all used to stay in the same room, MLV amma, her vocal accompanist (sometimes Prabhavati, sometimes Charu and later Sudha) and me. She looked after me like a daughter.

We used to discuss the concert, she asking for our opinions, and all of us exchanging ideas. On the concert platform, MLV amma used to speak with her eyes, and we were expected to understand her cues. I have never seen her sit and practice with the tanpura, such was her spontaneity! She never told us the concert items beforehand. Pallavis too were spontaneous. She gave many useful suggestions like how to play tanam, playing raga alapana with karvais (pauses), playing in the higher octave when she sang in the lower octave etc.

For quite a few years after MLV amma's demise, Kanyakumari organized twenty-four hours or twelve hours all-ladies Akhanda Gaanam (relay-singing).

The Soloist

Q) When did you start giving solo concerts?

I had been playing solo, along-side accompaniment all along. My first full-length solo concert was at Kottakkal. However, over the past ten years, I have been accepting very few accompaniment opportunities, like Kadri sir's concerts, since I am treated as an equal, and it is more like a jugalbandi.

Q) Did you feel constrained at some point, in just accompanying a main artiste?

Yes, definitely. I can show more creativity and originality while playing solo. Also it is sad but true that accompanists are given second-grade treatment, like difference in facilities while touring. But the positive side of accompaniment of course, is that, we mature as artistes and imbibe a number of styles.

Q) Do you feel limited while just playing kritis, have you been experimenting with other musical forms?

My solo concerts usually follow the traditional format. But if there is a special request from organizers, I play pieces/chords that I have composed, along with kritis, just like I do in my ensembles.

The Impresario

Q) How did you develop this penchant for orchestras?

Sri Lalgudi Jayaraman had done a veena/venu/violin ensemble, for some time. Then I thought, why not an ensemble with the nagaswaram. Actually everyone is scared of the nagaswaram because of its loud volume! So I created a veena/violin/nagaswaram ensemble with Mambalam Siva on nagaswaram, Vijayalakshmi on veena and myself on the violin. We did a couple of concerts in Paris and one for an anniversary of the CMANA organization in the US. I later went on to do concerts with 25, 50 and 75 violins. Then for the birth of the new millennium I assembled an orchestra of 100 instruments and composed a shata ragamalika - a piece with 100 raagas and 1 avartanam swaram in each raga.

For Shree Shree Ravishankar's birthday, I was invited to do an ensemble with 1500 instruments with a select list of compositions.

Q) How did you coordinate rehearsals for such huge ensembles?

Well, I would make a tape of the composition and distribute to participants beforehand. Of course, only

some would learn the piece and come for the rehearsals. So I would hold repeat rehearsals, very difficult task actually, but my interest makes me go on.

The Composer

Q) Tell us about your compositions.

Apart from my ensemble compositions, I have composed tillanas, one along with late Smt. Sulochana Pattabhiraman in Yamuna Kalyani and one on my own in Sindhubhairavi.

The Innovator

Kanyakumari has done jugalbandis with Shri Vishwa Mohan Bhatt on the mohan veena, and with Pt. Janardhan Mitta on the sitar.

She has released an album of tillanas called Dancing Melodies which includes tillanas composed by Shri Ramani, Shri Balamurali Krishna, Maharajapuram Santhanam, Tanjore quartette and her own tillanas. Her Prashantham album has her playing on the violin and Pt. Janardhan Mitta on the sitar with Carnatic and Hindustani raga equivalents. The Strings of Harmony album has 3 participants (one on veena, one on flute and one on violin) playing a full kutchery in 3 different octaves simultaneously.

Kanyakumari's one more novel attempt is a teaching video, for enabling interested students in remote places to learn.

The Teacher

Q) When did you first start teaching? Tell us about your students and teaching experiences.

about 5 hours of sleep a day.

The Person

Q) *It's now time to play favourites! Who are your musical favourites?*

GNB, Semmangudi, Dwaram Venkataswamy Naidu garu, in fact all the great masters. I also listen to film music, a lot of Ilayaraja.

Quirks, fancies, experiences and random thoughts?

A) I don't eat before playing Amba Kamakshi (the Shyama Shastri Bhairavi swarajati) daily, somehow I get a lot of satisfaction playing it.

An unforgettable experience occurred while playing in the Ananta padmanabhaswamy temple during a severe drought in Chennai - we played the swarajati 108 times for rains, after the last time, the heavens really did open up!

I am a great sentimentalist and very spiritual. While checking into airports abroad, I don't like the security officers touching footwear and my violin with the same gloved hand, so I request them to change gloves and they do acquiesce! Foreign audiences are very good they are able to appreciate instruments more. I strongly feel the presence of God in all my pursuits.

Kanyakumari signs off on a philosophical note with "I don't want to have a long life, as long as I'm alive I should play the violin, and should die performing, I want to train as many students as possible"

எல்லா நாட்டு இசையிலும் 7 ஸ்வரங்களும் 12 ஸ்வரஸ்தானங்களும் உள்ளன நயது தென்னக இசையிற் சிறப்பு என்னவெனில் இத்த 12 ஸ்வரஸ்தானங்களுக்கு 16 பெயர்கள் கொடுத்து இந்த ஸ்வரஸ்தானங்களின் சேர்க்கையின் மூலம் பல புதிய ராகங்களை உருவாக்கி இருப்பதுதான் இந்த 16 ஸ்வரஸ்தானங்கள் எப்படி பெறுபடுகின்றன என்றால் சதுச்சுரி நிஷபமும், ஸாதானாகாநாதாரமும் சதுச்சுரி தைவதமும், கைசிகி நிஷாதமும் முறைபேகத்த காந்தாரம், ஷடஸ்சுரி நிஷபம் கதநிஷாதம் ஷடஸ்சுரி தைவதம் என்ற பெயர்களை பெற்று 4 கூடுதல் ஸ்வரஸ்தான பெயர்களாக மொத்தம் 12 தானம்.

நமது இசையின் மற்றொரு தனிச்சிறப்பு
ஸ்வரங்களுக்குக் கொடுக்கப்படும் கமகத்தான்
இந்த கமகம் இரு தொகுப்புகளாக
கூறப்படுகின்றது. அவை பஞ்சதச கமகம் மற்றும்
தசவித கமகம் என்பனவாகும். தசவித கமகத்தில்
இடம்பெறும் ஒவ்வொரு கமகமும் ஒரு தனி
ஸ்வரத்திற்கு மட்டுமே கொடுக்கப்படுவதால் சில
கமகங்கள் ஒரு பிரயோகமாகவே வருகின்றன.
உதாஹமாகச் சொல்வதானால் மூர்ச்சனை என்பது
'ஸ்ரிகமபதநிஸ்' என்ற ஏறு முகமான பிரயோகத்தைக்
குறிக்கின்றது. பஞ்சதச கமகத்தில் இடம் பெறும்
கமகங்கள் ஒரு தனி ஸ்வரத்திற்கு மட்டுமே வரும்.
இந்த இரண்டு தொகுப்பிலும் காணப்படும் ஒரு
கமகம் கம்பிதம் என்ற அசைவாகும். இந்த கமகம்
மட்டும் இந்த ஆய்வேட்டில் எடுத்துக்
கொள்ளப்படுகிறது.

முதலில் பார்த்த 12 ஸ்வரஸ்களான்களில் எகாவத
ஒரு ஸ்வரவளமானத்தை எடுத்துக்கொண்டு அகரிசு
மேலே குறிப்பிட்டுள்ள கம்பிசு கமகமனந்து
எப்படியெல்லாம் கொடுக்கப்படுகிறது என்பதும்.
அதன் மூலம் ராகங்களின் வெளிப்பாடு எப்படி
அமைகிறது என்பதும் இங்கு ஆய்வேட்டில்
பார்க்கப்பட்டுள்ளது.

12 ஸ்வரஸ்தானங்களில் எதை எடுத்துக் கொள்ளலாம் என மார்க்கபோது ஸாதாரண காந்தாரம் எடுத்துக் கொள்ளமாடுவது சிறந்தது எனத்தோன்றியது ஏன் ஸாதாரண-காந்தாரம்

எடுத்துக்கொள்ளப்பட்டது என்பதற்கான விளக்கம்
முதலில் கூறப்படுகிறது.

[illegible][illegible]

பெரியளவில் பரக்கையில் வாழ்வாணக்காரர்கள், என்று இருந்தாலும் இந்த வகைக்கான பங்கு ஒவ்வொரு ராக்கத்திலும் அமைக்கப்படாமலே உள்ளது இப்பொழுது பூர்வாணக் கல்வாங்களை ஒவ்வொன்றாக எடுத்துக் கொண்டு அவுரின் கடைப் பிழைப்புகளைப் பார்ப்போம்.

இங்கு ஷஹீதாரு ஸ்வரூபின் அனைவரும் எப்படி பொதுவாக அமையும் என்பதுதான் பார்க்கப்படுகிறதே அன்றி எந்த ராகக்கின்

27

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BUILDING MUSICAL BRIDGES - THE HINDUSTANI EXPERIENCE

by Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan

March 29, 2008. The auditorium of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in Mumbai, is set for the valedictory session of the three-day annual music festival of Swar Sadhna Samiti, an organization devoted to the promotion of Indian classical music. The founders, Dr. Aban Mistry (the first woman to obtain a doctorate in tabla) and her guru, the late Keki Jijina, are both Parsis. The office bearers of the Samiti, Joint Secretaries Rupa Sethna and Feroze Katila, are also Parsis. The Samiti began in 1961 with the patronage of Kaikhuhru Navroji Kabraji, a Parsi, and Dr. Mistry's book on classical music begins with an invocation of the blessings of Dadar Ahura Mazda (Great God, for Parsis) but when the evening's programme begins, it is with a song in praise of Sarasvati, the Hindu goddess of learning, sung by Parsis.

This is just one example of the seamless integration that marks the Indian musical scene, with devoutly religious individuals holding their dedication to the Muse higher than their personal religious affiliations. There is no contradiction, no raised eyebrows, no fisticuffs over alleged "hurts caused to religious sentiments". That is in politics. In the arts, there is more of linked hands across religions than of fisticuffs.

Shirin Vazifdar, who hailed from a traditional Parsi family, took to classical Indian dance forms and earned a name as a leading exponent. She danced to lyrics in praise of the Indian pantheon of Gods and divinities. Pandit Feroze Dastur, a Parsi, who was honoured with the prestigious

Kalidasa samman of the Madhya Pradesh government and the Sangeet Natak Akademi award, learned classical vocal music from the legendary Sawai Gandharva of the Kirana gharana and went on to become himself one of the leading lights of that style. When he sang khayals, he was not even conscious of whether the words were in praise of Krishna or Allah. What mattered was just the music. Dr. Aban Mistry's book records how Parsis set up the Gayan Uttejak Mandali in Mumbai for the promotion of Indian classical music in the latter half of the 19th century - nearly 140 years ago. Eminent patriots like Dadabhai Naoroji. Parsis are the descendants of migrants who came to western India from Persia 12,300 years ago, to escape religious persecution and to safeguard their Zoroastrian faith. Over time the integration of some members of the community into the Indian cultural ethos was such that some of them set up an organization for the promotion and propagation of Hindustani classical music, even while they continued to owe allegiance to their Zoroastrian faith.

When one tries to compile a list of such examples where artistic devotion transcends religion, an astonishingly long list of artistes emerges, showing how culture has always played, and continues to play, a very important bonding element in our lives.

Allauddin Khan, Ravi Shankar's guru, called himself a Brahmin (some say he even wore the sacred thread) and was so

devoted to the muse that he worshipped Saraswati. The medieval composer Purandara Dasa has composed a song in Kannada in which he extols brotherhood with Muslims ("thurukaru" meaning Muslims) and encourages inter-dining with those of the Islamic faith. The Tamil patriot-poet Subramanya Bharati too composed a song "Allah, allah, allah" which is quite well-known. In fact, the history of Hindustani music is full of composers who sang in praise of Lord Krishna and Rama. Ustad Mushtaq Hussain Khan of Rampur gharana, who was the first musician to be chosen for the Sangeet Natak Akademi award and the Padma Bhushan in newly independent India, composed a dhrupad with the lyrics "Ramachandra Krupa nidhe" which so pleased the Muslim nawab ruler of Rampur state that he (Khan sahib) was rewarded handsomely for his effort by his princely patron. Another composer, Ras Khan, is said to have been so taken up with his devotion to Lord Krishna that he migrated to Brindavan and sang ecstatically in praise of Kanhaiya (as Krishna is fondly referred to, in the north). Ustad Ghulam Mustafa Khan has a large icon of Lord Nataraja in his drawing room, along with a calligraphy of a verse from the Koran at the entrance. One of the khayals he has composed is in praise of Ganapati. A composer named Rahim (obviously a Muslim) has composed several songs on "brij ke bihari" (Krishna) as has Kazi Ashraf Mahmud, who too has sung about Krishna in such lyrical terms that one is reminded of the ecstatic descriptions of Meerabai's songs. A book titled "Bhajan sangrah" (collection of bhajans) published by the Geeta Press of Gorakhpur, includes several

such songs composed by Muslims on Hindu Gods. Perhaps in this sense, the north steals a march over the south, in terms of inter-religious music-making (although the Carnatic system too has examples like Sheikh Chinna Moula, the nagaswaram player). To a greater extent than in the south, performing ensembles have typically, a mix of Muslims and Hindus performing together (Zakir Hussain will accompany Shivkumar Sharma). Why go further than the popular duo of yesteryear, Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan, who performed together for decades?

Artistes have always sat together, especially in Hindustani music, irrespective of religious divisions. When Bade Ghulam Ali Khan sang "Hari Om Tat Sat", audiences loved the rendition as one of his favourite items. The record of this song is still played repeatedly, over the radio, bringing nostalgic memories to music lovers.

My guruji Ustad Hafeez Ahmed Khan's father Ustad Rashid Ahmed Khan was such a devout Muslim that he had left instructions to his family that after his death he should be buried only at the holy Nizamuddin dargah in Delhi. His wishes were carried out when he passed away, but this same ustad also composed a beautiful Bandish ki thumri in raga Keervani in ek tal, in praise of Krishna (Tore bina mohe chain naheen, Brij ke nand lal, meaning I cannot be at peace without you, my beloved Krishna, a composition which Rashid Khan renders frequently in his concerts). In the reverse direction, Bhimsen Joshi sings the famous composition Kareem naam tero, in Darbari Kanada, in praise of Allah. As for Shehnai Samrat

Bismilla Khan, it is widely known that he refused to leave Varanasi because he could not contemplate being away from his beloved Kashi Vishwanath that the city is famous for. One of my favourite CDs is that of Jesudas, a Christian, singing "Swagatam Krishna".

One can cite a large number of examples, of both musicians and composers, who have crossed - or disregarded - the religious divide, without causing any flutters among audiences or communities. The 12th century female composer Lal Ded, of Kashmir, who is often compared to Meerabai because she disregarded social restrictions, has sung a song in which she says Muslims and Hindus should be like brothers and friends. Nearly a millennium later, we seem to be in dire need of recalling such sage advice about communal harmony.

Harmony is in fact, the key word — if we emphasise harmony (not jarring discord) in defining good music (whether of the north or the south) what is the problem in extending the concept of harmony to society as a whole? Is this perhaps one reason why we need to give greater importance to music as a subject in our school curricula, so that children right from a young age, learn to sing together and sing about inter-religious brotherhood? Today's curricula have no place for such "frivolous" activities as music and the arts. Science and computer education are seen as important, but those in charge of deciding educational content forget that these seemingly "frivolous" activities too imparted some very important 'education' to growing generations of citizens. Those

who sing together live together in harmony. In countries of the west, music is in fact being used as a very effective means of drawing children with behavioural problems (vagrants, rag pickers, street children, drug addicts and gangs known for violence) into the social net. This has been demonstrated particularly in south American countries like Venezuela. Jose Antonio Abreu, the man who drew inspiration from this idea, has won international recognition (including the Alternate Nobel award) for the pioneering work he has done, in terms of improving social harmony through the use of music. The band he has put together, of young street children and drifting adolescents, has become famous and is much in demand for concerts.

Pandit Paluskar used music as a powerful tool for mass patriotism during the freedom struggle (as did Subramanya Bharati of the south too). Even today, musicians of India and Pakistan perform together, and forget their political barriers once they find common aesthetics through art.

Music can build bridges where politics divides regions and people. A musician is an artiste first, a south Indian or north Indian, Hindu or Muslim or Parsi or Sikh, only second. Raga and rhythm become important, not Ram or Rahim.

When the popular saying claims that music ennobles, it was referring to the aesthetics of sound patterns, but in another, more communal sense also, perhaps, Indian music especially of the north shows that music can build bridges that span the religious divide with ease. □

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THE RISE AND FALL OF THE NATTUVANAR

by A. Seshan

Nattuvanar: an expert musician who sings and plays the cymbals and conducts the whole dance recital. U. S. Krishna Rao. A Dictionary of Bharata Natyam.

The definition above sums up the quintessential qualities of an ideal nattuvanar who is well-versed in all the departments of Bharatanatyam. Singing, keeping the beats and conducting, that would include choreography also, are the three outstanding features characterizing him. Look at 'musician' being mentioned first. *Sangeeta Ratnakara* defined sangeeta in terms of geetam (song), vadyam (instrument) and nrityam (dance) in that order. The crucial role of music in the profession of nattuvanar is emphasised in all the classics on Bharatanatyam. Till about the middle of the 20th century the nattuvanar held a pre-eminent place with a break for a few years due to sociological reasons. Some of the traditional nattuvanars could trace back their lineage to the days of the Cholas of Tamil Nadu more than a millennium ago. The profession fell into a decline in the course of the 19th century as the devadasis who were the only ones to nurture the art over centuries and whom they trained came to be looked down upon as samanya nayikas. Hence there was a movement to abolish the system of devadasis. Then the danger emerged of the baby being thrown with the bath water.

The revival of the dance, after the abolition of the devadasi system in the first half of

the last century thanks to the efforts of E Krishna Iyer and Rukmini Devi, generated a new type of demand for the services of nattuvanar from respectable families. The proliferation of music sabhas and schools and the patronage of the art by the public replacing the princes and the affluent of the past meant new opportunities for the teaching of the art form. The social stigma attached to dance disappeared as girls belonging to the upper strata of society were willing to train themselves and perform in public. The entertainment industry, particularly the medium of film, meant yet another opening for the dance masters. Thus the nattuvanar graph was on the rise. Think of the times when Vazhuvur Ramaiah Pillai conducted performances of Anandi and Radha with M. S. Subbulakshmi joining in to sing padams. However, in recent years, thanks to new trends in choreography and the very fact that well-educated men and women are taking to the art, reinforced by technological developments, has led to a certain decline in his status on the stage from being the conductor of a dance programme to becoming a member of the orchestra; he has to blame only himself for this deterioration. The plight of the old-time nattuvanar has not attracted much attention from rasikas or scholars with the exception of an in-depth article by Gowri Ramnarayan a decade ago ("Where are the master gurus?", Gowri Ramnarayan, *The Hindu Folio* - October 27, 1998). Adyar Lakshmanan expressed his concern over

the changing profile of the nattuvanar at a Symposium on Choreography at the Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha in Mumbai during November 8-9, 2003 (*Dance Symposium on Choreography - A Report - Part II*, A. Seshan, in *Shanmukha*, January-March 2005).

Nattuvanar in modern times

The nattuvanars of yore had rigorous and formal training not only in nattuvangam but in singing and playing on mridangam also. We are fortunate that we still have such professionals like Adyar Lakshmanan, C.V.Chandrasekhar, the Dhananjayans, K. Kalyanasundaram, et al., who are bravely holding the flags of the old-time nattuvanar high but they are only a few. The classic *Mahabharata Chudamani* was discovered and delivered to the world by the late U. V. Swaminatha Iyer. In her Introduction to the book brought out by the Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. U. V. Swaminatha Iyer Nool Nilayam, Chennai, Rukmini Devi says, while recommending it for reading by all students of music and dance: "Music is Dance and Dance is Music." Learning the mridangam helps in reciting the drum syllables. Unfortunately, in an age of specialization in which we live, the nattuvanar, instead of being 3-in-1, has allowed his role to be trifurcated. Those who can sing, recite the sollukkattu and keep the tala counts are becoming rare. They are a vanishing tribe and can be included in the list of endangered species! Singing for a dance recital is different from that in a regular music concert. The nattuvanar should be looking at the dancer and not at his notes in order to be in tune

with the sthayibhava. Even nritta has a bhava aspect. In the popular programme entitled "Thaka Dhimi Tha" telecast on Jaya TV this writer saw a talented nattuvanar, Sivalokanathan of Koothambalam of Erode and Karur, reciting jatis in the traditional manner, which he had never heard before. He demonstrated how, if the dancer slackened, the guru could pull her up gently by modulating his voice in reciting jatis! Vallinam and mellinam (hard and soft intonation) in rendering the jatis contributes to aesthetic pleasure. This applies to the playing of mridangam also requiring guidance from the guru at appropriate times.

This writer has been shocked to see some nattuvanars looking at their notes even for reciting jatis! It is like looking at multiplication tables or using a pocket calculator to find out the product of 7 and 16 instead of doing it mentally! The singer-nattuvanar interface with dancer is symbiotic. It is very crucial for the success of a programme as each influences the other, especially in sancharis. The same is true of the interaction between the dancer and the mridangist also. Recently this writer attended an Odissi recital by the Italian artiste Ileana Citaristi at the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Mumbai. He was pleasantly surprised to see the mridangam player vocalizing the jatis looking at the dancer even as he was playing on the percussion instrument. He could see how it contributed richly to the total effect of the programme.

The traditional nattuvanar was a choreographer too. There is a wrong idea that choreography means a dance

arrangement only for modern themes. Even the margam of a formal dance programme calls for choreographic skills in relation to not only dance movements but aharya, lighting, etc. Unfortunately the nattuvanar is nowhere in the picture nowadays in relation to these matters. It is the dancer who is the choreographer and he is just an accompanist. There are, of course, a few exceptions, as mentioned earlier.

The decline in the status was brought out in an exchange of views at the symposium on choreography at the 21st Natya Kala conference at the Sri Krishna Gana Sabha in Chennai in December 2001. One eminent and highly-respected natyacharya shocked the audience by saying that the traditional nattuvanars did not know anything about choreography! Obviously he thought of it only in its modern or contemporary formats and not the one belonging to margam. As a member of one of the panels on the concluding day, this writer argued that choreography did not mean only arranging dance dramas on themes like Chandaliika or 9/11 but classical performances also. He said that it was a continuum and the Tanjore Quartet were the first choreographers in the modern sense of the term. One may call the choreography for the traditional margam as Puradana Natana Amaippu (Traditional or Conventional Choreography) in Tamil and that for modern or contemporary dance as Naveena Natana Amaippu (Modern Choreography) (See www.kanakasabha.com for this writer's review of the Chennai conference.) This view found support

among many delegates. Looking back, this writer feels that, in fact, Bharata was the first choreographer in India, if not in the world, as in his *Natya Shastra*, a classic on dramaturgy, he took a total, comprehensive and integrated view of the discipline. Vazhuvur Ramaiah Pillai has, in his Tamil book "*Deivika Adarkalai*" ("*Divine Art of Dance*"), dealt with the changing trends in conventional choreography classifying them under ancient, medieval and modern categories. He has described how he choreographed his own productions. One of his innovations was the Naganrityam, based on a song of a Pampattich Chittar, providing scope for the execution of some difficult karanas. It became popular thanks to Kamala. He had also produced a number of dance dramas. He introduced statuesque poses in *tillana a la* the sculptures of dancers in temples.

Pratibha Prahlad has taken a correct view of nattuvanar's importance in her short but illuminating book entitled "*Bharatanatyam*" in the Dances of India Series brought out by Wisdom Tree. She says: "The nattuvanar traditionally is the *dance guru* whose choreography is danced by the dancer and under whose direction the musicians perform. He not only plays the cymbals but also recites the jatis, korvais and teermanams." (p.78) (emphasis added.) But then she follows this up by saying: "Sometimes dancers who choreograph their own pieces, train nattuvanars to conduct the recital." This is a case of the reversal of roles - the shishya teaching the guru!

Qualities of a dance guru

The nattuvanar is a guru. *Silappadikaram*

calls him 'adalasiriyan' (teacher of dance). *Sangeeta Ratnakara* of Sarangadeva has a section describing the qualities of an ideal guru. Rangaramanuja Iyengar's book on this treatise says: "Tamil classics like *Silappadikaram*' and *Jeevakachintamani*' describe in enthralling verse the versatility attained by Madhavi and Gandharva Datta through their training under great teachers. Sarangadeva, doubtless, realized, as well as Illango (*sic*) and Tirutakatevar (*sic*), the contribution of a dedicated teacher in unfolding the potentialities of a student.

"The magnetic glow of an awakened personality, absolute mastery of technique integrating the body and soul of the dance art, a live sense of rhythm and tempo in all their subtleties, *expertise in conducting the dance ensemble, acquaintance with the individuality of musical instruments*, a sound knowledge of tradition acquired from seasoned veterans, *capacity to improvise song hits and rhythmic sequences, flair for new creation in style*, resourcefulness in handling situations, imparting instruction in dance and music and establishing with students a profound rapport flourishing on perfect identification and devotion to ideals, and lastly, an intuitive perception of the strength and weakness of a student - these made a good teacher." (emphasis added.) (*Sangeeta Ratnakaram - A Study*, R Rangaramanuja Iyengar, Wilco Publishing House, 1978, pp 367-368. As he says in the preface, he "attempted, not a translation, but a critical survey of the formidable array of musical data in the classic to assess their contribution to the development of Carnatic Music.") It is generally accepted that

Sarangadeva belonged to the 13th century. His treatise on music and dance was the summing up of the state of the art after several centuries during which the fine arts had flourished in the country. The italicized words should disabuse one's mind of the notion that the traditional nattuvanar cannot direct group dances, is not familiar with orchestration and cannot improvise. The only difference between him and the modern natyacharya is that Nandanar has been replaced by 9/11!

Mahabharata Chudamani has a section entitled "Nattuvan Lakshanam" (characteristics of a nattuvanar) (*op.cit.*). There are nine verses enumerating them. They are so lofty that no nattuvanar can ever aspire to reach that standard!

Recent Trends

There are, however, certain recent trends that are welcome. One is that more and more well-educated men and women are taking to Bharatanatyam. It is common to see graduates and post-graduates in subjects like electronics, micro-biology, etc., learning and practising dance as a profession. As a result they are open to experimentation in such areas as fusion, something which traditional nattuvanars of a conservative bent of mind may not approve. The old-time guru never danced. So he could concentrate on nattuvangam. But now the modern-day guru dances either solo or in a group. So, of necessity, he or she has to engage others to sing and recite jatis.

Another welcome development is women learning and teaching nattuvangam. In fact the field was all along restricted to males

so much so there is no equivalent word in Tamil to refer to the female nattuvanar. K J Sarasa of the Vazhuvur school became the first woman-nattuvanar in the 20th century. She has trained literally hundreds of students and seen the arangram of many of them. Many of her students win prizes at the dance competitions held in Chennai during the December festival. But she does not dance. Although she wanted to learn dancing she was dissuaded from doing so by Vazhuvur who advised her to learn and concentrate on nattuvangam instead. Kamala Rani taught nattuvangam in Kalakshetra. She wrote a book on the subject. There are dancers who have started their own schools of dancing. The syllabuses and approaches of their classes may differ but rarely do they cover the entire gamut of the art form in all its departments as it was in the past. Such dancer-teachers cannot teach music themselves and they do not take the help of musicians either for supplementing the training. It is, of course, possible that there are exceptions.

Institutional vs individual trainers

Total integrated training in music and dance is perhaps more easily attained in modern times in institutions than in the homes of individual gurus. No doubt, in the past, an individual nattuvanar could successfully do it because often he had other members of the family specializing in singing, playing on the mridangam, etc. They could supplement his teaching. In general, this is not the situation now. Kalakshetra is a good example for successful institutional training. According to a website, the intent of the institute is to

create a consummate performer, one who is an adept dancer, and has a thorough understanding of the theoretical, literary and musical basis of the traditional margam. Therefore, language, music and theory are subjects that support the main subject of study. Each dance student must study vocal music or an instrument as a subsidiary subject. Dance students are encouraged to also study mridangam in order to strengthen their understanding of tala or rhythm. Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit, the languages most commonly found in the poetry of Carnatic music are part of the syllabus.

In the distant past, performances were fewer and mostly in temples and durbars of kings. It was possible for the guru to be present to conduct the programme. Now it is physically impossible because of the number of disciples each guru has and their programmes are widely distributed geographically. The jet-setting modern dancer thinks of minimizing costs even for performances within the country. Tape or cassette recorder comes in handy. It takes the place of the nattuvanar! Even where there is live orchestra, the dancer prefers to have a singer and a jati reciter in the place of guru besides a couple of instrumentalists to save costs. A further development is the use of CDs and Internet for teaching the art form. The nattuvanar of the 21st century is in the process of becoming a nettuvanar! How far this is good and desirable is a subject for discussion by all those interested in the healthy development of Bharatanatyam, or, for that matter, any art. This has already happened on a substantial scale in the field

of Carnatic music with NRI students reportedly being taught over the telephone from India by vidwans! While certainly students should take advantage of technological devices they should constantly ask themselves as to whether they will be fully baked or half baked at the end of training!

Music, the anchor for nattuvanar

When people asked the by-then blind and notoriously picky Veena Dhanammal why

she attended the dance shows conducted by the Pandanallur doyen Minakshisundaram Pillai, she would say, "To hear Minakshisundaram sing, of course, what else?" (Gowri Ramnarayan, *op cit.*) When are we going to see again the likes of a Kittappa Pillai singing a jatiswaram or a Vazhuvurar conducting a performance with the recital of jatis in his leonine voice?

□

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I, Jayaram Mani, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and behalf.

LOGICAL APPROACH TO RAGA PARIKRAMA IN HINDUSTANI MUSIC

by Prof. Y. M. Mahale

Rāga Parikramā is a very vast subject which needs to be discussed logically, analytically and dialectically with practical demonstration. To put anything in writing in the form of an article will reduce its periphery and will force one to generalize the subject to the extent of the approach with which the Ragdari Sangeet needs to be presented.

All art in its ultimate and highest level is individual self-expression. But apart from individual expression, there is regional self-expression, provincial self-expression and national self-expression. Music after all, is an art which is man-made and it is constantly progressive. Sound is nature's voice but music is man made, and human voice itself is the origin of music. Hence, the arrangement of musical tones varies not only with different nations, different civilizations and different societies but even with different individuals and it is in these, that tradition plays an important role. Tradition is as important in music as it is in the culture of the people. In fact our music has developed through the past ages to its present form on the basis of tradition - oral instructions from generation to generation. After passing through all the discipline of ear and voice training in the traditional system of ragas and talas, (which are just the medium of expressing oneself) a student of music (if he has the true artiste in him) evolves fresh forms of musical expression, which in themselves set a new tradition. One and the same raga

or even a composition in that raga may not be sung exactly in the same way by two musicians. Style in music is another name for the way or manner of musical expression. The personality of the musician, the temperament and mental makeup of a musician influences his musical expression or style. Music is a dynamic art, it is not static, still or dead picture to be hung on the wall. A musician is free to develop a raga and a musical composition according to his knowledge gained through training, experience, capacity of practical presentation and his inspiration, without damaging the form of the raga and within the limits of the melodic scheme of the raga. Raga, the basis of all Indian music is a melodic scheme observing certain definite rules of progression and elaboration

One of the most significant practical aspects in rendering of the raga is, the "Uchchar" (उच्चार) and the other is, what is known in the common parlance as "Laga-Dant" (लग-दाँट) or "Muraqqibad" (मुर्ककोबाद). It is perhaps the peculiarity of Hindustani Raga Sangeet, that a number of ragas may be having exactly the same flat and sharp (komal and tivra) notes and yet each raga is distinct in its impression by the difference in the "Uchchar" and/or in the Laga-Dant. Uchchar literally means pronunciation, which in the context of the raga, stands for the correct intonation and correct rendering of each and every individual swara of the raga - not only in its pitch but also in its

expression.

Lāga-Dānt is the popular name of the other feature, which gives a raga its distinct character. It is referred to in the Granthas as "Antar-Marg" which means Swara Sangatis or Swara Sanchar. The practical demonstration of the Ragas Bhairav and Kalingda will explain the significance of the term "Uchchar". These two ragas have identical scale, which is equivalent of the Maya-Malava-Gaula of Karnatak music. Both these ragas have komal "Re" and komal "Dha" in their Aroha and Avroha. In Bhairav, the Rishabh and dhaivat should be sung with "Andolan" or "Oscillation", whereas in Kalingda these two notes are sung plainly without oscillation. Another pair of ragas is Bhimpalasi and Dhanashri, both having identical sets of notes in the aroha and avroha, as: NI, SA, GA, MA, PA, NI, SA — SA, NI, DHA, PA, MA, GA, RE, SA, where GA and NI are komal and the rest of the swaras are shuddha. In the Raga Bhimpalasi, this scale is sung in a comparatively slow tempo with Meends (slurs) and Andolan (oscillation) on Gandhar and Nishad, while in Dhanashri the tempo is faster without Meends and Oscillations. The third pair of ragas which can be sighted as example for Uchchar, is Sarang (commonly known as Bindravani Sarang or Vrindavani Sarang) and Megh-Malhar. Here again these two ragas have an identical scale. Both are pentatonic (having 5 swaras, also known as auvdava jati) in the ascending and descending order (i.e. Aroha and Avroha) as: SA, RE, MA, PA, NI, SA — SA, NI, PA, MA, RE, SA with komal NI in Avroha. The difference in the Uchchar of the swaras in these two ragas,

as indicated below, will show how the two ragas are distinct from each other in their impression and form.

In Sarang the swaras are sung plainly, whereas in Megh-Malhar every note is sung with a particular Gamak or Aghat, such as:

नि म प सां	म प म रे सा
सा, रे, म, प, नि सां	सां, नि, प, म, रे, सा

Now referring to the term "Laga-Dant" or swara sangatis which I have explained above, the supporting example of the scale SA, RE, GA, PA, DHA, SA - SA, DHA, PA, GA, RE, SA could be very apt to show how this particular feature gives four different ragas, viz; Bhoopali, Deshkar, Jait Kalyan and Pahadi, all of them having an identical said scale, but each one has a distinct independent effect of its own by the very manner of Uchchar of the Swaras and the Swara Sangatis apart from the other points of distinction such as, Vadi Bhed, Poorvang - Uttarang, Prabalatva and Durbalatva. Another group of ragas in support of the said feature is Puriya, Marwa and Sohani. The scale in these three ragas is also identical as:

सा, रे, ग, मे, ध, नि, सां | सां, नि, ध, मे, ग, रे, सा

But each one has its own independent form, character and impression with the peculiar feature of Uchchar and Swara Sangati i.e., Laga-Dant (key phrases). To explain and elaborate the actual form of the ragas of the above-mentioned two groups, it is worthwhile demonstrating the swara vistar practically rather than just writing the swaras on paper. I am purposely restricting myself from doing the said exercise of writing the swara visters of the

said ragas here, thereby not allowing this article to cross the limit of its size. But the practical aspects as explained above clearly shows how our Hindustani Ragdari Sangeet is individualistic in its expression and characteristic.

Every raga has its own personality, or rather you may say that every raga is a personality by itself. So when we talk of personality, it has its mood, temperament, feeling (i.e. bhava) and character. So the musician has to keep in mind the emotions and the personality of the raga that he is presenting. All the same, the presentation should reflect his own personality, his emotions and feelings.

Now the other point for discussion is, the deviations and difference of opinion among the musicians of the different Gharanas with regard to certain ragas. In fact the Gharanas of the Khayalias have been evolved from the different and distinct ways of expression and renderings of the khayal by a few celebrated leading vocalists who seem to have created each, a peculiar individual style of singing and developing khayals, subsequently spread among a group of persons through their disciples, sons and relatives, more or less of a similar physical and mental make up. Likewise, the Gharanas of the Dhrupadias were known as Banis viz, Dagur Bani, Nohar Bani, Khandahar Bani and Gauhar Bani.

Firstly, when we talk of Siddha Ragas which have acclaimed definite forms, such as, Yarnan, Bhairav, Todi, Malkauns, Marwa, Poorvi, Shree and so on; the renderings of these Ragas by the musicians of the different Gharanas will display their

knowledge, their skill, their ability and experience in performing those Ragas in their respective Gharana style. But the form of those Ragas will not change or rather should not differ from the commonly acclaimed form. This is as simple as, when we talk of English literature or any other language, the different writers and authors of the books will write in their own respective style, but will strictly adhere to the rules of grammar and the form of the language. Logically, this should also apply to our Ragdari Sangeet as I have stated above with regard to those ragas, which have acclaimed definite form through the ages and the traditional compositions in those Ragas.

With regard to the second category of Ragas where there are deviations and difference of opinion among the musicians of the different gharanas, there has to be a logical and analytical approach to see the various views and opinions of those musicians regarding the forms of those Ragas. From the positive angle it would be worthwhile to consider such ragas as different Prakars of say Nat-Malhar, Patmanjari, Khat, Nayaki- Kanada etc.; because each one has its own beauty if that variety of a Raga has assumed its form through a composition or compositions which have survived the test of time and have been accepted by the musicians as worthy compositions for performance. There need not be any standardization of such varieties.

Even a popular Raga like Bageshree is sung in three different ways, i.e.:

1) Sampoorana Bageshree

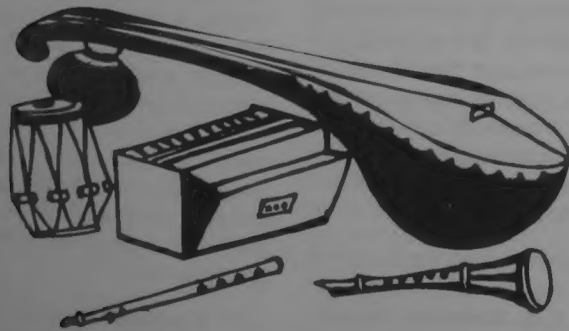
- 2) Shadav-Sampoorna — omitting "PA" in the Aroha
- 3) Shadav-Shadav - omitting "PA" in Aroha and Avroha

There are traditional compositions in all the three varieties or Prakars of Bageshree and each one has its own beauty.

The idea of standardization of the practical form of art like Indian Music needs **great caution**. After all, Music is a great art in its practical form and a great science in its theoretical aspects. It is a spontaneous outcome of the capacity of the human ear to grasp and reflect back artistic aural forms. Theory should help and not smother art and musical mathematics is like a labyrinth. You cannot come out of it once you enter in it. As such, science and mathematics are instruments, which help to explain what happens in practical music.

Our music is like a flow of water taking its own course, conditioned by ups and downs and angles and corners on its way, and due to these, with greater or lesser force. Engineering its course to the minutest point measurement would probably divest it of its natural charm. No doubt, some sort of outline is absolutely essential when music has to be understood, appreciated and learnt by the masses where a considerable amount of matter has to be grasped intellectually, it being not possible to present a practical model before any body and everybody, which otherwise, would have been the best method of imparting knowledge and practical idea of a melody. But we must not stretch the analysis of musical intervals and musical expression to the breaking point so that they lose their musical value itself.

□



VIVID VISUAL PRESENTATION OF VAISHNAVISM IN BHARATANATYAM

by Jyothi Mohan



The Sri Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha presented Vaishnava Bharati-a thematic presentation, by noted dancer Urmila Satyanarayana, on 8th June 2008, at the Shanmukhananda Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi Auditorium. As the heavens were not too kind that day, the audience was sparse. For those who braved the elements, it was an audio-visual delight making it worth their effort in reaching the venue.

The programme was choreographed to highlight the similarity between the map of India & the *naamam-the* Vaishnava insignia.

Swamimalai S. K. Suresh-the very talented and accomplished grandson of the legendary Swamimalai Rajaratnam Pillai set the pace with a soulful rendering of the popular Sriman Narayana in Bowli.

Urmila, entering the stage with her effusive million-dollar smile, commenced with a *pushpanjali* composed by S.K. Suresh in *Kedaram* into which were woven shlokas describing the glory of Vishnu. It concluded with the portrayal of Krishna in the North East, as Jagannath in Orissa, as Venkateswara in Andhra Pradesh, as Ranganatha in Tamil Nadu, as Udipi Krishna in Karnataka, as Vithala in

Maharashtra and Krishna in Uttar Pradesh. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's devotion through his verses in *ragam Hamsadhvani* represented the North East. Orissa was shown through *Pralaya Payodhijale*. Normally dancers enact the stories behind each *avatara* but Urmila did a description of the lyrics penned by Jayadeva very lucidly. The ragamalika composition with changing *nadais* was handled with consummate ease and artistry by Suresh. Urmila's perfect poses of *matsya*, *kurma* etc. were a treat to watch. Her taut *nritta*, *aramandi* and facile *abhinaya* showed her years of dedicated practice and devotion to the art form. *Nritta* was woven into the *swaras* between each *avatara*. For *Andhra Pradesh*, she chose *Annamacharya's Yentamatramuna*. A Tamil shloka describing Krishna's beauty formed the prelude. A verse / *shloka* in Telugu would have been more appropriate, one felt. The dilemma of a devotee as to whether the Lord was Vishnu, Shiva, Kalabhairava or Shakti was projected very tellingly. Tamil Nadu was seen through a vivid description of *Andal's* dream in *Varanam Aayiram* taken from the *Nachiar Thirumozhi*. *Goda kalyanam vaibhogame* was very lilting showing the wedding and the charming *oonjal* sequence. Ranganatha accompanied by Goda, seated on the Garuda, moving towards the wings, made for a beautiful and unusual exit which brought forth spontaneous applause from the audience. Kerala was reflected in Poonthanam's *Kandu-Kandu* which sings the glory of Guruvayurappan-her portrayal of life, man's avarice for worldly desires as he grows older and death in its starkness was

beautifully presented. In this transient world, Krishna is the only reality says the poet. In contrast, was the lively *Mella mellane bandane* of Purandaradasa, in which the gopis complain to Yashoda about the unbecoming behaviour of her darling son, Krishna. As the naughty prankster, as the angry gopi and the indulgent proud maternal Yashoda - Urmila was a delight to watch. Maharashtra was shown through Namdev's *abhang* which sings in praise of Vithala of Pandharpur. The devotional dancing could have incorporated movements typical to the Maharashtrian devotees to give it its authentic flavour. For Uttar Pradesh, Mirabai's *Pag Ghunguroo Re* was selected. Here too, there was more suggestion of Mira performing Bharatanatyam in *naachi re-than* her dancing in ecstasy thinking of her Lord. Swathi Tirunal's *Dhanasri tillana* in praise of Krishna as Padmanabha provided the *nritta* element. The concluding *Vaishnava Janato* of Narsi Mehta formed a fitting finale to this thematic presentation on Vaishnavism.

Swamimalai Suresh's mellifluous flawless singing and crisp *nattuvangam* added lustre to the beautiful presentation. Evocative violin support by Shri R. Kalaiarasan and his beautiful delineation of *Shankarabharanam* must be mentioned. Shri P.P. Haribabu's deft strokes on the *mridangam* and *dholak* provided excellent rhythmic support. The rich tapestry of *ragas*, *talas*, *nadais*, as well as the involvement of the *vadyavrin*da complemented the sincerity of the dancer. □

INDIAN MUSIC - THE ROYAL PATH TO LIBERATION

by 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan

Indian mystics have left an enormous output of varied literature on the royal path to meditation and liberation of soul. Indian thoughts had spread to many countries particularly in East Asia owing to historic contacts in the past. When the West got exposure to them in recent centuries, they were received by eminent authorities of philosophy and culture with genuine appreciation, admiration and understanding.

Mr. Yehudi Menuhin is well known for his passionate understanding of the spirit and contents of Indian Music in a measure that is *non pareil*. He had averred that 'since I came across it, I have imbibed it as an integral part of my life itself.' No greater praise is necessary. The address he delivered five decades back at the Asian Music Circle, London, of which he was the President, has much that should guide us to gather a more significant appreciation and understanding of the respective appeal of the music of Bharat *vis a vis* that of the West. He said:

"Indian music varies from that of the West in that it creates an atmosphere of dedication of not only artists but of audiences too. It seeks to release them from baser emotions so that mind and spirit are free to rise up to the spheres of meditation and liberation. Indian music

seeks the release of the individual through personal discipline while Western music involves much more collaboration of diverse elements. As the Indian has set out and kept up the spirit of individual purity very well, Indian Music with its strength in improvisation had never become the vehicle of combined effort and consequently has always maintained the purity of the melodic line. This improvisation has the greatest appeal to those in the West. This improvisation is comparable to the capacity of the poet to allow free play to his imagination. The mastery of great Indian musicians over this unique medium is so great that it gives full freedom and play to their imagination in completely perfect form. Consequently, the atmosphere of an Indian musical concert is very much elusive and it takes quite a great deal of cooperation from the audience. On the other hand, the harmonic structure of Western music enables many people and many elements to combine together. "You must not expect to be forced, as you would be by a symphony, into a passionate sense of being."

Mr. Menuhin has highlighted the merit and strength of the Indian art. May the soul of Indian Music, i.e. its merit of improvisation and individuality, be fully assimilated, relished, lauded and impregnated with ever-fresh modes. □

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BOOK REVIEW

MOHINIATTAM ADAVUS & MUDRAS

by Jyothi Mohan

MOHINIATTAM ADAVUS & MUDRAS

by Geeta Radhakrishna

Published by : MNKCharitable Trust

132 Pgs; Price: Rs. 450

Mohiniattam, an ancient dance form of Kerala, which almost faded into oblivion, was given a new lease of life by the renowned poet, Vallathol Narayana Menon. His untiring efforts inspired scholars and Gurus to restore this dying art form to its rightful place as one of the classical dance styles of India.

Initially teachers faced difficulties in developing a substantial repertoire for Mohiniattam due to lack of documentation of the art form. Odissi which also faced near extinction was revived with the aid of information stored in palm-leaf manuscripts and temple sculptures. Kuchipudi was restored as a continuing tradition existed. But Mohiniattam scholars and teachers had nothing to fall back upon save an item called *cholkettu* which was handed down from teacher to student.

The *cholkettus* are beautiful items full of exquisite *adavus* with an intricate pattern of rhythmic movements set to vibrant *chollus*. Since Geeta had the good fortune of learning from the legendary Kalyanikutti Amma and Kalamandalam Satyabhama, she based her research on the *cholkettus* she learnt from them. Though they were similar, they had variations and that helped enrich the bank of *adavus*. Geeta has analysed each movement retaining the original movement as an *adavu*. Using her imagination, she has combined several

original movements to define a new movement to add to the variety. *Adavus* have been drawn with postures, movements and footwork. From the starting position to its conclusion, each *adavu* has been sketched elaborately with lucidity. 150 *adavus* have been described. Section One, deals with 100 *adavus* classified on the basis of varied feet, hand, leg and body movement. Section Two contains 50 *adavus* classified according to variations in rhythm. From the *Namaskaram* to the concluding *Teermanam*, everything has been covered systematically. A great deal of effort has gone into the drawings to present them in the right angle with accuracy.

Geeta has included a section on *Mudras* as delineated in the *Hasta Lakshana Deepika* used by practioners of Mohiniattam, with original Sanskrit *shlokas* for ready reference. In the final section of her educative book she has included relevant texts of *Natya Shastra*, *Abhinaya Darpana*, *Bharatanava* and *Sangita ratnakara* for the student. This very comprehensive book was first published in 1991. Due to its immense popularity it was sold out soon after. Hence Geeta has come out with a second edition and hopes that dancers, teachers and lovers of dance will find this ready reckoner of Mohiniattam technique, useful in understanding the grammar and intricacies of this divine art form. This book should be a boon for not only dancers here but also for dancers living abroad, who do not have access to a *guru* when in doubt. □

HAPPENINGS AT THE VIDYALAYA

by Nalini Dinesh



The month of May was vacation time at the Vidyalya, and hence this report is rather sparse, look out for more events in this space next quarter.

Swathi Tirunal Day -19 April 2008

Blessed with a good voice, well aligned to sruti, Vimarshini Jayaram gave a solid recital beginning with a Durbaar composition Smara Manasa. She elected to do Poorvikalyani and Kharaharapriya alapana for the kritis Deva and Sathatham respectively. The sprightly Bhogeendra Sayinam in Kuntalavarali and Viharamanasa in Kapi followed, and ended on a romantic note with Jalaja Bandhu in Surutti. Vimarshini should pay more attention to correct splitting of words.

N. D. Vijayakumar, with his natural penchant for gamakas, began his recital with Padmanabha Palite in Malayamarutam. He elaborated Suddha Saveri well before rendering the Navatri kriti Janani Pahi. A short Manirangu alapana followed with the kriti Jaya Jaya Padmanabha. The pleasing Chaliye in Brindavana Saranga rounded off his recital.

Smt. Saraswati Murthy distilled and brought out the essence of the Semmangudi style in her soulful rendering of kritis. She started with the Kapi pada varnam Sumasayaka, and followed it up with Pahi Sripathe in Hamsadhwani. She essayed raga Shanmukhapriya for Mamava Karunaya and Hamsanandi for Pahijaga Janani. Jai Jai Devi in Misra Behag concluded the recital.



Sri Shanmukhananda

FINE ARTS & SANGEETHA SABHA (REGD.)

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